

27. RUSSELL'S EARTH BOA, *ERYX CONICUS*, PREYING ON A
LITTLE BROWN DOVE, *STREPTOPELIA SENEGALENSIS*

In the early hours of 21 October, 1985, while walking along one of the bunds of the Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur, I saw near one of the numerous Nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*) dung heaps on the trail, an Earth Boa, *Eryx conicus* peeping out of a hole in the ground. The hole was covered by the dung heap except for a small opening. A few Brahminy Mynas, Pied Mynas, White Cheeked Bulbuls and Jungle Babblers were feeding on and around the dung heap.

Some time later, a little brown dove, *Streptopelia senegalensis*, landed on the dung heap and started pecking around. The snake, which was apparently lying in wait, suddenly emerged and grabbed the dove's foot and coiled around it in a flash. The dove struggled as the snake's coils around it tightened. This went

on for about five minutes, when the dove ceased struggling and its nictitating membrane covered its pupil. The snake continued to tighten its coils around the dove for the next ten minutes and then started swallowing it, head first, finally swallowing it completely.

As the boa strangled the dove, the flock of birds which were feeding around the dung heap raised a racket and mobbed the snake.

Whitaker has reported boas preying on birds in a similar fashion, but there is no record of the little brown dove forming a prey of the Russell's Sand boa.

A similar incident was observed again by me a few months back in the National Park.

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28. ADDITIONAL NOTES ON THE PREY ITEMS OF GREEN WHIP
SNAKE FROM POINT CALIMERE SANCTUARY, TAMIL NADU

An instance of Green whip snake preying on *Phylloscopus* sp. was recorded (Panneerselvam and Alagar Rajan 1985) from Point Calimere. In another instance on 1 November, 1985 at 1300 hrs near the Old Forest Rest House we heard the distress call of a bird from a *Madhuca longifolia* tree, and to our

surprise we noticed a Green whip snake holding a Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis* by its neck. The snake was choking the bird's neck and the voice of the bird gradually became faint. At about 1315 hrs we saw that the bird was dead. At 1325 half of the bird from head down had been swallowed. After a few minutes

the snake moved towards the upper canopy of the tree still holding the half swallowed bird in its mouth.

In one more instance, on 15 February, 1982 at 1400 hrs one of us (P.B.) while on a plant collection trip at Nandupallam area, noticed a Green whip snake (c. 1 metre) catching a young monitor lizard (c. 30 cm). The snake

was seen hanging from a *Manilkara hexandra* tree holding the young wriggling *Varanus* sp. tightly in its mouth. At about 1430 hrs the *Varanus* died and became motionless and the head and neck portion of the *Varanus* had been already swallowed by the snake. Immediately after the *Varanus* died, the snake holding the *Varanus* in its mouth moved into the dense canopy of a nearby tree.

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REFERENCE

PANNEERSELVAM, R., ALAGAR RAJAN, S. (1985): A note on Green whip snake predated on *Phylloscopus* sp. *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* 82(2): 423.

29. FIRST RECORDS OF *BUFO STOMATICUS* AND *BUFO FERGUSONII* (ANURA: BUFONIDAE) FROM ORISSA, WITH COMMENTS ON THEIR DISTRIBUTION

Studies on the amphibian fauna of Orissa go back to 1965, when Behura wrote a book in Oriya (Orissara Benga: Frogs and toads of Orissa) in which he recorded four species of amphibians from Orissa. Mohanty-Hejmadi (1976) and Mohanty-Hejmadi and Dutta (1976) reported 13 species of amphibians from the State. The present report of two species of *Bufo* from Orissa is a further addition to the amphibian faunal list of the State.

***Bufo stomaticus* Lutken**

Specimens examined: INDIA: Ajmer: Rajputana: BM 1947.2.20.52-53; 80.11.10.132-

133 (syntypes of *Bufo andersonii*). Orissa: Sambalpur district: Barpali: KU 200354-85; Brajarajnagar: SKD 2941-51. Tamil Nadu: Tirunelveli district: Mela Neelitha Nallur: CM 60170-71. West Bengal: USNM 38193-94; Calcutta: BM 1909.11.10.2; FMNH 72398-99. Maharashtra: Bombay: BM 83.11.26.105-106. Sikkim: BM 1860.3.19.1362. SRI LANKA: Colombo: BM 1932-5.7.2-3; 1955.1.10.85.

Distribution:

India (Assam, West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka, western and eastern Himalayas up to 6000 ft.). Outside India, the species extends from eastern Iran and southern